



**Government of Kerala**

## **MULLAPERIYAR**

### **Safety for Kerala Water for Tamil Nadu Our Solution**

We wish to convey to all the grave threat being faced by 35 lakh people in Kerala. It is on account of Mullaperiyar Dam. This 111 year old lime and surkhi is an unsafe structure and its shadow looms as a threat over the citizens living in the downstream areas of the dam.

The State of Kerala does not intend to deny its waters to Tamil Nadu. Even while the Mullaperiyar issue is alive and contentious between our two States, we have agreed to release water from Neyyar to Tamil Nadu. We are seeking a solution for a very serious problem that affects the life and property of the citizens of this country.

The Mullaperiyar Dam was commissioned in the year 1895. It was constructed at a time when the technology for building dams was much inferior to the present day technology. It was constructed with rubble and lime surkhi. Over the years, a large quantity of lime has been leached away making the old dam structurally weak.

Normally for a dam of this nature the life span is 50 years. Now after 111 years the entire structure is unsafe. I say this to remove any misapprehensions that the dam is safe till 136 feet and is dangerous only if the water level in the reservoir is 142 feet or more. I stress that the entire structure is unsafe and dangerous.

The lease agreement signed between the then State of Travancore and Madras Presidency was for a period of 999 years. This dam cannot last for 999 years. In fact there are no dams which can last such a long period. Therefore, the lease deed of 1886 is incomplete and presupposes the construction of a new dam as a replacement for the existing structure.

I may be asked what is our stand in the interim period when a new dam is being constructed. My answer is providing adequate quantity of water to Tamil Nadu even during the lean months and meeting the safety consideration for Kerala as far as it can be achieved.

Construction of a new dam as a replacement to the existing dam is not a new proposal. It was identified as a long term solution in 1979. What we are saying is that the time has come to act on the long term solution that has been identified in 1979.

The dam is situated at the junction of 2 fault zones which has high seismic potential. There have been several earthquakes during the recent past. Mercifully the epicenter of the earthquakes have been away from the dam site. Bursting of the Koyna dam in Maharashtra, caused by an earthquake, is still fresh in memory and remind us that there is no reaction time when an earthquake occurs. I fail to think what would happen if even a moderate intensity earthquake centering around the dam site takes place.

Recent developments have posed a peculiar problem to us. What happens if Tamil Nadu does not draw water from the reservoir. This is what happened in the recent past due to, I am sure, very valid reasons on their side. The storage in the reservoir rose to dangerous levels. The structure does not have a river sluice gate to release water from the reservoir when Tamil Nadu does not want water. Nor can such a structure be now put in place in this old dam. We feel therefore that the storage levels should be kept below 136 ft. level.

Our proposal is to have a new dam in Mullaperiyar as a replacement to the old dam. A new, modern, technically sound dam that will keep in mind both the safety concerns that we technologically address in this dam would take care of seismic activities and their impact on the dam. To conclude, what we are proposing is a new dam that would provide water to the people of Tamil Nadu and remove the shadow of fear from the minds of the people of Kerala.

Excerpts from the opening remarks by

**Shri. V. S. Achuthanandan,**

**Chief Minister of Kerala**

on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2006 at New Delhi in meeting convened by

the Union Minister for Water Resources

in connection with the Mullaperiyar Dam issue

To view Mullapperiyar visuals visit:  
[www.keralacm.gov.in](http://www.keralacm.gov.in)

**Information & Public Relations  
Department  
Government of Kerala**